

Fox rightly maintains that electric railways have become one of the most useful factors in promoting healthy living conditions. They have permitted decentralization of cities and a new art of city planning which has a very practical application to public and private health. The noxious zone fare system of Europe should not be allowed to gain foothold in the United States. Cheap flat fare, a network of lines, long direct ride for five cents, electric lines used to open new living districts, all are of definite public health value. While building operations have been stopped as a war measure, is a most favorable time to foster suburban homes and destroy the tenement. Increase of railway fares does just the opposite.

Finally is to be considered the argument that cost of operation demands a higher fare. This argument, as above stated, is fallacious because street railways are a public utility and modern necessity. They are essential for sanitary housing and living conditions. The test of their just fares must, therefore, be what the bulk of the passengers can and will afford to pay. Experience shows that the five-cent fare permits and encourages decentralization, good housing, better living conditions, hence, promotes the public health. A limited experience shows that increased fares defeat these ends. If private companies cannot operate without increase of fares, they should give way to government ownership whereby the deficit can become a public charge in the interest of public health. Increase of fares should be vigorously opposed everywhere.

#### THE BUSINESS OF MEDICINE.

Medicine is an art. It has become a science. It is and will increasingly be a business. The physician must live and support his share of social and economic order. In return for his income he has a very definite commodity to offer, a very definite contribution to make to society. This commodity is his scientific skill in instructing people how to maintain and regain health. This commodity is of definite market value and is listed among social and economic necessities. It is a necessity for society in general, for industry and for the individual. Therefore it is right that society, industry and the individual should pay the physician in proportion to the service he renders. We are not now discussing free service to the poor, further than to say that society at large must pay part of its cost while the varying balance is paid by the physician.

How much should the physician be paid and how should he be paid? For the answer to these questions we turn with authority to the general principles of merchandising which are no whit different. It is no more incumbent on the physician to dispense his services free than it is incumbent on any other seller to dispense his wares or services free. In proportion as those wares or services are human necessities, must the seller stand ready to furnish them free to the needy. For this free service, society and the giver share the cost. The physician, then, has a definite and necessary commodity to offer the public. Why should he not follow the

usual principles of good business in the transaction?

A recent interesting and stimulating brochure by Dr. G. S. Peterkin of Seattle, entitled "Ethical Economics versus Medical Ethics," analyzes the elements that compose a physician's business assets. It states that the original examination of a patient must be thorough and scientific. All methods of diagnosis must be employed. These methods must be so systematized as to omit no essential detail. To this end, a logical efficient office and organization is necessary. Thoroughness and scientific precision require time. They also spell maximum efficiency in medicine. Personal attention to a client or his affairs is absolutely requisite for success. In the day are 24 hours of 60 minutes each. Sleep, food, exercise, recreation, study, vacations, illness, unavoidable delays,—these and more, cut down the financially productive time at the physician's disposal. With due regard for maintenance of mental and physical efficiency for a long term of years, eight hours a day is the highest safe average that the average physician can maintain as a routine. Time is the physician's greatest asset, and the basis on which he must develop his income.

Conservation of time is, therefore, the physician's first necessity. To this end he must systematize and organize himself, his surroundings and his associates. He must then see that he receives due compensation for his time and skill. To this end he must keep accurate accounts, render monthly statements to his patients and see that accounts are paid. If he does not do these things, he has but himself to thank if his business fails. And his business is no different from any other business, in that to remain solvent he must follow good business methods. It is properly coming to be considered discreditable for a physician to be unbusinesslike in his business.

In the Correspondence Department of this issue is a letter from Attorney H. G. Bittleston containing some pertinent business advice for physicians in just this connection. Read it. It will do you good.

The medical profession cannot and will not remain aloof from the economic changes following the war. It is not a matter of advising an alternative course. It is a matter of pointing out the only surviving course. It holds for country doctor and city doctor alike. Systematize, organize, and be businesslike.

#### THE SMALL TOWN HOSPITAL.

There is no valid excuse for an inefficient small hospital. If it cannot be adequately supported and give service in accord with modern hospital ideals, it should cease to exist and the sooner the better for all concerned. Various definite and clearly understood factors tend to interfere with the success of the small hospital. The reasons for lack of success should be carefully analyzed and the appropriate cause attacked at its root. There is no reason why there should not be a hospital in nearly every small town and in many industrial and rural sections with a more scattered population. Several villages can often combine to advantage in maintaining a small hospital. The